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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill, who passed away on December 8, 2007; and

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WHEREAS, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill was born on May 9, 1919 in Jeanerette, Louisiana; her parents were August and Lilly Gravenberg; and

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WHEREAS, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill lived with her older sister, Minola, in a Catholic convent after a pneumonia epidemic took the lives of her parents in 1920; in the early 1920's, she, along with her sister and their older brother Conrad, moved to New Orleans, Louisiana to live with their Aunt Maggie Matthews; and

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WHEREAS, In the early 1930's, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill moved to Los Angeles, California with her sister and brother, attending public school while living with Conrad and his wife; she later moved to Pasadena, California with Lillian Piersaul and her husband, where she attended Washington Junior High School and Pasadena High School; and

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WHEREAS, While attending school in Pasadena, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill began to receive ballet and vocal training,

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1 later attending Pasadena Junior College to further hone her
2 craft; her incredible vocal skills were first showcased at the
3 First A.M.E. Church in Pasadena, where she was often selected
4 to perform solo; during her time at First A.M.E. Church, she
5 met fellow church choir member Walter Worrill, whom she married
6 in September of 1940; their first son, Conrad Walter Worrill,
7 was born to them on August 15, 1941; her passion for helping
8 children led her to a position as a teacher at the Pacific Oaks
9 Nursery School in Pasadena; and

10 WHEREAS, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill's musical talents
11 reached further heights in 1946, when she had the honor of
12 singing at the wedding of baseball legend Jackie Robinson; in
13 the late 1940's, she became a member of the Pasadena Civic
14 Chorus, performing in major concerts throughout the city with
15 the renowned group; and

16 WHEREAS, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill assisted her
17 husband in his work with the YMCA Movement during the 1940's;
18 in 1950, the YMCA transferred Walter to Chicago; having
19 difficulties finding suitable housing, the family resided at
20 the YMCA Hotel in Chicago until a kindly waiter, known as Mr.
21 Anthony, allowed the family to lease an apartment he owned at
22 5640 South Maryland in Chicago; on April 29, 1951, a second
23 son, Oscar William Worrill, was born to Anna Belle and Walter;
24 and

1 WHEREAS, Once the family was settled into Chicago, Anna
2 Belle Gravenberg Worrill quickly became involved with the choir
3 at St. Mark's Methodist Church, where she was instrumental in
4 the organization of the church's Handel's Messiah concert, a
5 concert that is still performed by the church today; she also
6 became a member of the Chicago Music Association and became the
7 protege of the late Theodore Charles Stone; and

8 WHEREAS, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill was made a lifetime
9 member of the National Parent Teacher Association in honor of
10 her participation at the schools her two children attended; she
11 developed an excellent reputation as an aggressive advocate for
12 both her children and school children in general, ensuring that
13 the children received everything that they needed to prosper;
14 she eventually accepted a position as an administrative clerk
15 in the Bursar's Office at the University of Chicago, where she
16 worked faithfully for over 15 years; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1957, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill and her
18 family purchased a home at 8450 South Prairie in Chicago's
19 Chatham neighborhood; she quickly became well known for her
20 neighborly presence, concern for those in the community, and
21 vociferous support for African-American owned businesses; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1970, Walter Worrill accepted a new position

1 with the YMCA, leading Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill and her
2 husband to Pennlyn, Pennsylvania; returning to her Catholic
3 faith, Anna Belle attended a local Catholic church in Pennlyn;
4 after their divorce in the late 1970's, Anna Belle remained in
5 Pennlyn and accepted a position at a local nursing home; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1989, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill moved back
7 to Chicago in order to be closer to her family and friends; she
8 went on to reside in the Renaissance Senior Citizen Residence
9 in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood, where she lived until
10 her unfortunate passing; and

11 WHEREAS, Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill is survived by her
12 sister, Minola; her sons, Conrad (Talibah) and Oscar (Denise);
13 her former husband, Walter; her grandchildren, Michelle, Femi,
14 Sobenna, Kimberly Aisha, and Gloria Ann; her 8
15 great-grandchildren; and her many in-laws, nieces, nephews,
16 cousins, and friends; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
19 her family and friends, the passing of Anna Belle Gravenberg
20 Worrill; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
22 presented to the family of Anna Belle Gravenberg Worrill as an

1 expression of our sympathy.